DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 246 792 HE 017 515

AUTHOR Kallio, Ruth E.; Knepp, Marilyn
TITLE Responding to Changes in Administrative Roles through Professional Development. AIR 1984 Annual Forum Paper.
PUB DATE May 84
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research (24th, Fort Worth, TX, May 6-9, 1984).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Role; *Administrators; Higher Education; *Inservice Education; *Institutional Research; Knowledge Level; Microcomputers; Needs Assessment; *Professional Development; Program Evaluation; Program Implementation; *Researchers; *Staff Development; Word Processing
IDENTIFIERS *AIR Forum

ABSTRACT

An institutional research/planning office's attempt to deal with the professional development needs of its staff is described. The objective was to broaden and develop the knowledge base and technical skills of the office as a whole, as well as to benefit individuals. A unique aspect of the program was the development of an in-office training program to supplement opportunities available elsewhere. The suggested paradigm involves: assessing needs, identifying opportunities and constraints, matching needs to resources, developing an in-office program, implementing the program, and evaluating the program. For the needs assessment, staff members were asked to evaluate their present level of knowledge and skills and to identify five areas of professional development that interested them. Sixteen sessions were held as part of the formal in-office program, including the following offerings: word processing, personal computer usage, and finance and budget. Informal portions of the professional development program included a variety of individual and group experiences (e.g., individual efforts to become familiar with the microcomputers and software). Program evaluation involved assessment of costs and benefits and achievement of objectives. (Author/SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED246792

RESPONDING TO CHANGES IN ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ruth E. Kallio
Senior Research Associate
Office of Academic Planning and Analysis
The University of Michigan
6074 Fleming Administration Building
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1340
(313) 764-9254

Marilyn Knepp
Administrative Associate
Office of Academic Planning and Analysis
The University of Michigan
6074 Fleming Administration Building
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1340
(313) 764-9254

A paper presented at the Twenty-Fourth Annual AIR Forum
Fort Worth, Texas
May 1984

HE 017 515

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

AIR

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

THE ASSOCIATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

This paper was presented at the Twenty-Fourth Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research held at the Hyatt-Regency in Fort Worth, Texas, May 6-9, 1984. This paper was reviewed by the AIR Forum Publications Committee and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC Collection of Forum papers.

Daniel R. Coleman, Chairman
Forum Publication
Advisory Committee

Abstract

This paper presents a description of and rationale for one institutional research/planning office's attempt to deal with the professional development needs of its staff in an intentional, systematic, and continuing way. The objective was to broaden and develop the knowledge base and technical skills of the office as a whole, as well as to benefit individuals. The method used was a multipronged approach which relied on a variety of educational resources. A unique aspect of the program was the development of an in-office training program to supplement opportunities available elsewhere. The suggested paradigm is to: (a) assess needs, (b) identify opportunities and constraints, (c) match needs to resources, (d) develop an in-office program, (e) implement the program, and (f) evaluate.

To say that one of the primary challenges of higher education today is to respond to constantly changing social, political, technological, and economic environments has become a cliche. Nevertheless, the challenges are here and will continue. New styles of leadership and approaches to problem-solving are emerging as administrators attempt to deal with a complex array of problems and issues. As a consequence, institutional researchers, now more than ever, must cope with a changing set of role expectations and demands (Chase, 1979). As the tools of the trade become increasingly sophisticated and varied due to the rapid expansion of knowledge and technology, and as acceptance of their use grows among high level administrators, changes in the basic education and continuing professional development needs of the institutional researcher become paramount. Identifying professional development activities that are adequate to the task and enabling participation in them at a time of increasing office workloads and stable or declining budgets can be difficult.

This paper presents a description of and rationale for one institutional research/planning office's attempt to deal broadly and systematically with the professional development question. The aim is to outline a framework and an approach that might be of assistance to similar offices as they confront staff development needs.

The office described here consists of nine permanent staff members (mostly full time) and a fluctuating number of temporary, part-time staff members (primarily graduate students). During the past year, the headcount has ranged from twelve to seventeen, with most staff members in research positions. The educational backgrounds of the staff members represent a wide variety of levels of attainment and fields of study. On occasion, budget stringencies have meant replacing experienced staff members who leave with less experienced junior staff members. The strategies of using a combination of regular and

temporary staff and of hiring people with diverse backgrounds have been deliberate and are expected to continue.

The development program was initiated not only out of a desire to keep abreast of new theoretical and technical developments, but also as a response to changes in office activities and functions, changes in staff composition, and general concerns for career enhancement and advancement. This office has always viewed professional development as a shared responsibility and has consistently encouraged individual activities. In the course of office and staff planning, however, it became apparent that efforts needed to go beyond maintaining a supportive atmosphere for professional development activities to requiring staff participation in an intentional, systematic and continuing program. The objective was to bring about organized, focused growth for the office as a whole, as well as to benefit individuals. Because of the diversity of office personnel, it was clear that no one avenue for development would suffice. Rather, a multipronged approach for broadening the knowledge base and technical skills of the staff through the use of a wide range of educational resources was needed. A unique aspect of the program was the development of an in-office training program to supplement opportunities already available locally and through professional organizations such as the Association for Institutional Research.

Background Literature

The characteristics and resulting professional development needs of the institutional research office of this study appear to be typical. Studies show, for instance, that the profession consists largely of young persons with advanced degrees in diverse fields but with limited experience in institutional research. Such staff members need to assimilate the knowledge necessary for applying their training and skills in the institutional research setting (Tetlow, 1979; Dressel, 1979).

The organizational behavior literature suggests that employees are motivated to engage in professional development activities because of their needs (internally felt deficiencies which act as a "pushing" force) and their goals (external objectives or outcomes which act as a "pulling" force). Extrinsic factors, such as fee reimbursement, and intrinsic factors, such as a sense of achievement and growth, influence and reinforce this behavior (Cummings and Schwab, 1973). A problem is that the needs and goals and the many factors which influence them will vary considerably for professionals depending on their career stages and their assigned or desired responsibilities.

Professional development programs must, therefore, flow from and respond to the varying needs and interests of individuals. Chase and Tetlow (1979) suggest that such programs should be based on three key considerations: (a) the individual's level of responsibility, (b) the individual's length of experience, and (c) the institution's environmental orientation. Whereas the novice institutional researcher is motivated by job performance and career advancement factors, the experienced institutional researcher, who may be frustrated by the lack of distinct career paths, sees professional development as a way of enhancing job satisfaction (Johnson, 1982; Fenstemacher, 1982). Because diminished advancement opportunities stem in part from the static or contracting state of higher education, a condition not likely to change in the near future, career enhancement opportunities are imperative if the quality of a professional staff is to be maintained (Cyert, 1975).

The general needs of the profession as a whole, which parallel those found in the office described here, vary from developing "relevant technical, social, and political skills" (Chase and Tetlow, 1979, p. 27) to learning content areas such as systems analysis, organizational theory, data processing, and financial operations (Spencer, 1979).

Vehicles for professional development include professional reading, on-the-job learning, workshops and conferences, and formal academic or internship programs (Fenstemacher, 1982; Chase and Tetlow, 1979). Chase and Tetlow note that the nature of the knowledge or skill to be transmitted should determine the mode of instruction. Emmett (1983) suggests the use of multiple, rather than single, training strategies, because people learn in different ways and at different rates.

Most of the existing literature focuses on the needs of individuals or individual performance problems (as in Mager and Pipe, 1970). Considerably less literature is to be found about the distinctive need for professional development from an organizational or group perspective. This paper presents a paradigm for systematically identifying and matching professional development needs and resources at an office level. The paradigm's six components are: (a) assessing needs, (b) identifying opportunities and constraints, (c) matching needs and resources, (d) developing an in-office program, (e) implementing the program, and (f) evaluating it.

Program Planning and Development

A growing awareness of a problem and the need to address it led to the first stage of activity, a needs assessment carried out in June of 1983. Senior staff of the office developed a survey instrument based on an outline of the various current and anticipated conceptual and technical areas relevant to office projects and functions. In the survey, all staff (professional and clerical) were asked to assess their present level of knowledge and skills and to identify five areas that were of the most interest to them for professional development.

Ten responses were received and analyzed. Survey results were used to prioritize office needs as a whole; areas of greatest interest included both theoretical and technical topics. However, the value of the survey went beyond this. It seemed to serve as a catalyst for stimulating enthusiasm and

intellectual interest in various content and skill areas, and for clarifying the preferred directions of learning for individuals.

The second stage of program planning consisted of identifying and assessing the various opportunities and constraints. This meant, on the opportunities side, identifying the educational resources and programs available inside and outside the office and the University. Existing University programs included those offered by the Office of Human Resources Development, the Data Systems Center, the various teaching departments, and the like. Various periodicals and mailings provided information on other programs offered locally and elsewhere.

On the constraint side, there were limited budget resources available for activities involving travel costs or program fees. Other constraints included time, eligibility requirements, and space limitations imposed by programs. The ease of participation was another factor, as staff were less likely to attend programs which required a great deal of personal investigation and motivation.

Information from the first two stages fed into the third stage in which the collective and individual needs were matched with existing programs, given the known constraints. Although some needs could be met by external programs, many others could not. For example, the Human Resources Development programs focus on University policies and procedures and on general skill development. They are oriented more towards staff in clerical or administrative positions than towards staff in research positions. These programs were only applicable to a few members of the staff, and therefore were inadequate for meeting some of the primary needs of the office as a whole.

Another example where existing programs did not meet office needs was in the area of microcomputer training. Because very little was offered on campus, programs available through local computer stores were investigated.

There was limited interest in these programs, however, due to their high costs and to uncertainties about their relevance and the quality of instruction

The responsibility for developing a program that would fill the gap created by unmet needs was assigned to two senior staff members. The intent was to supplement rather than to duplicate educational opportunities readily available elsewhere. Thus, the fourth stage of the project consisted of planning an in-office program. The following assumptions guided the plans:

1. The program would be staffed primarily by office personnel, thus making use of existing expertise.
2. Sessions would be targeted to specific knowledge or skill needs. In determining program content an attempt was made to distinguish between "nice to know" and "need to know" information.
3. The program would include both theoretical and technical topics.
4. A variety of modes of instruction would be used, including formal group presentations, semistructured experiences for one or two individuals, self-directed learning, mediated instruction, and learn-by-doing experiences.
5. Whenever possible, instructional materials would be developed which could serve as instructional resources and aids on a continuing basis.

Using these assumptions, the program planners developed a schedule for September through January. Sessions were scheduled with some regularity so that the program had a feeling of momentum, thus encouraging commitment to and interest in the program on the part of staff members. The schedule took into account general workload patterns of the office and expected arrivals of new staff members. The schedule was not viewed as a fixed entity, but rather as a guide to program implementation which could be revised and adapted in response to a changing set of circumstances. The first topics scheduled addressed areas

in which the program leaders had extensive knowledge and some teaching experience to ensure that the program would begin well.

Office staff meetings provided an opportunity for staff members to discuss aspects of the program format and schedule. The office director made it clear that although participation in all programs was not required, staff were expected to participate in as many programs as possible that were appropriate to their needs.

Program Implementation

The fifth stage of activity involved implementing the program. Program offerings on the original schedule were advanced word processing (a technical skill) and budget and finance concepts (theory based practice) in the first two months, to be followed later by information resources in the office and a series on basic computer and data base concepts.

Fortunately, the schedule was flexible, for it underwent the following revisions in the first few months: (a) A basic word processing session was inserted into the schedule to accommodate new staff members and then was repeated two months later, (b) the advanced word processing series required three sessions instead of the two that had been planned, and (c) the budgeting and finance concepts series was postponed due to schedule conflicts of one of the resource leaders.

An unanticipated event which had a major impact on the program and its schedule was an office decision to purchase six stationary and four portable microcomputers. The arrival of the microcomputers in early December created an immediate and high priority need for training staff in their use. This meant focusing all the available time and energy on one area until most of the staff members achieved a basic level of competence.

The need for the basics soon gave way to an ongoing need for advanced training. Therefore, the program shifted its emphasis from needs identified in the staff survey that related to mainframe computers to those that related to microcomputers. A brief hiatus occurred in the formal aspects of the program when the microcomputers first arrived. The formal program resumed in early January with a clearer direction and purpose.

Program Offerings, September Through March

Formal Programs

Sixteen sessions have been held as part of the formal in-office program. Six of the sixteen have been offered as part of the PC Users Group, a group of staff members from within the same vice presidential area who have all recently acquired personal computers. The purpose of the group is to provide a forum for sharing and enhancing collective knowledge and for encouraging further use of the microcomputers and their software. From the beginning, this group was conceived to be an integral part of the office professional development efforts. Staff from this office initiated the group and continue to have responsibility for coordinating its activities.

Table 1 gives a brief description of each of the 16 sessions. Most sessions required about two hours of time, except the PC Users Group sessions which were held during the lunch hour. Approximately 280 participant hours have been devoted to all sessions, excluding leaders' preparation time, from September through March. Included in this total are hours spent by individuals in closely associated offices who were invited to join sessions on mutually beneficial topics.

A number of staff members have assisted in leading these programs. Presenters have included seven individuals from within the office as well as two individuals from other closely related offices.

Table 1

Formal In-Office Programs

Date	Program (Number of Participants)
9/23/83	Basic Word Processing: fundamental concepts using Wang dedicated word processing equipment (7)
9/27/83	Advanced Word Processing I: advanced features and available utilities (14)
10/6/83	Advanced Word Processing II: continuation of 9/27 session (9)
10/13/83	Advanced Word Processing III: continuation of 9/27 session (5).
11/16/83	Basic Word Processing: repeat of 9/23 session (6)
1/18/84	PC Users Group: introductory session for staff to share experiences to date and determine interests for future sessions (19)
2/1/84	PC Users Group: demonstration of FRIDAY!, a file management system and report generator (15)
2/10/84	Information Resources I: availability, location, and appropriate use of various types of information and data sources in the office (13)
2/22/84	PC Users Group: demonstration of the spelling verification feature of Multimate, a word processing software (12)
2/27/84	Information Resources II: continuation of 2/10 session (8)
2/29/84	PC Users Group: (a) demonstration of Hewlett Packard graphics plotter using Lotus 1-2-3 graphs and BASIC programs, and (b) demonstration of Desk Organizer personal productivity software (12)
3/8/84	Budget and Finance I: state appropriations process and its relationship to the University budget cycle (11)
3/21/84	PC Users Group: demonstration of Multiplan, an electronic spreadsheet software (15).
3/22/84	Budget and Finance II: budget development simulation using a case study approach (13)
3/29/84	Budget and Finance III: continuation of 3/22 session (13)
4/4/84	PC Users Group: telecommunications demonstration using a CAT modem and Hayes Smartmodem with interfacing software (16)

Formal programs external to the office have also been a part of the professional development series. Staff have participated in: (a) various on-campus programs, (b) microcomputer software classes offered elsewhere, (c) formal degree credit programs, and (d) activities of professional associations.

Informal Activities

The informal portions of the professional development program included a variety of individual and group experiences. The "informal" label refers more to the scheduling and style rather than to the content; the learning that took place was thorough and systematic.

Most staff members demonstrated individual initiative to become familiar with the microcomputers and software. Autotutorial diskettes, which came as part of a purchased software package, and other published tutorials were used widely by staff. Individual efforts were also encouraged by the office purchase of books, manuals, users guides, and periodicals. An informal lending library was established to provide easy access to these materials.

Evidence of individual interest and initiative was seen from the start in the almost constant use of the microcomputers during the workday. More telling evidence, however, appeared in the staff member requests to take the portable computers home in the evenings and on weekends. The demand on weekends typically exceeded the supply. Staff members initially used weekends to speed their learning of software. Now, home use is devoted more towards work on office projects and less towards learning activities.

A few staff members learned a great deal individually while planning for the purchase of the microcomputers and related software. This planning required intensive reading on a variety of topics in order to evaluate options and to make decisions. The resulting gain in knowledge was very useful later in introducing the rest of the staff to the computers and facilitating their learning efforts.

Another instance of significant individual activity occurred as staff members prepared to lead the formal group sessions. This preparation was in and of itself an effective learning experience, as it involved refamiliarization with known but forgotten information as well as the discovery of new information. In some cases, intensive study was necessary so that newly acquired software could be quickly introduced to the staff.

Informal activities have also taken place among groups. For example, a staff member with extensive knowledge of University data bases was paired with a new staff member who needed to access the data base in order to complete an office project. An important but less evident contribution to professional development occurred in the frequent conversations and problem-solving discussions that took place. As staff members began to use the microcomputers as work tools, the most efficient means to solving a software problem often was consultation with other staff members. The amount of knowledge gained in this way, individually and collectively, was significant. These conversations also revealed which staff members were developing proficiencies which could be tapped later for PC Users Group presentations.

Program Evaluation

The sixth stage of activity involved evaluating the program to determine achievement of objectives, to identify problems and possible solutions, and to recognize and compare the costs and benefits. The evaluative comments that follow are based on responses to a survey of staff, informal feedback received throughout the project, and insights gained through coordinating the program. The survey asked each staff member to identify all participation in professional development activities for the year, to evaluate the usefulness of the knowledge gained from formal programs, and to indicate future program preferences.

Achievement of Objectives

Overall, participation levels have been very high. On the average, staff members attended ten of the sixteen in-office sessions. In addition, six staff members have participated in formal external programs other than those for degree credit.

In evaluating the in-office programs they attended, most staff members felt that the content had added significantly to their knowledge and that they expected this knowledge generally to be useful. Evidence of the utility can be seen in the increased usage of the microcomputers and the dedicated word processors. Staff members have adapted quickly to this new technology and collectively exhibit fairly extensive knowledge of its use.

Based on survey comments, staff are enthused about the program and seem to be more intentional in their own individual efforts for professional development. As one staff member responded, "I think the idea of a continuing program like this is terrific. It's something I've felt a need for, for the 3+ years I've been here."

The enthusiasm for the program can also be seen in the willingness of the staff to serve as program leaders. This was an area of uncertainty at the beginning of the series: Would anyone be willing to make presentations to the group as a whole? Staff not only have agreed readily to give presentations but have approached the task with thoroughness and care. Most sessions, for instance, have included useful and well prepared handouts. This is indicative of the level of staff commitment to the program.

Problems and Solutions

Although problems were encountered, none presented major obstacles. Many minor difficulties were related to the high level of staff turnover. To accommodate new staff members, for example, some programs needed to be repeated. A problem arose, however, with the arrival of a new staff member

who needed individual training in an area already covered by the rest of the staff as a group. Although there was a willingness on the part of staff to share knowledge with others who were at the same, more advanced level, it was not mutually beneficial to spend concentrated time and effort with the new person who needed to catch up. A more concerted effort will have to be initiated, therefore, to quickly upgrade the knowledge and skills of new staff members so that they won't be isolated from the benefits of collective processes. This may mean a greater reliance on external programs. Because of University sponsored efforts to increase the availability and use of microcomputers among faculty, staff, and students, it is reasonable to expect that there will be more external programs available in the future that will suit these needs. In some cases, cost savings still will dictate the continuation of in-office training in areas where an external program is also available. In-office programs will continue to play an important role in meeting more specific and advanced training needs of staff members.

Staff turnover also hindered the needs assessment and evaluation processes. Not all of the individuals who participated in the needs assessment survey were still employed when the program was implemented. Similarly, the evaluation of the program was based on responses from some individuals who had not participated in the needs assessment. Thus, there was and always will be some degree of mismatch between the actual needs of the staff and the programs offered. To insure that the program continues to be viable and worthwhile, needs assessment and program evaluation efforts, both formal and informal, must take place on a continuing and systematic basis.

Scheduling problems necessitated many adjustments in the program and frequently caused minor irritations for the planners. Initially, this had been envisioned as a summer program, but that proved impossible to schedule because of vacations and the absences of permanent staff members. During the

academic year the large number of part-time staff with varying schedules made it difficult to find times when all staff members who were interested in a program could be present. Additionally, unpredictable events occasionally wreaked havoc on the schedule. Other work demands created a continuing tension in giving the program the priority it needed. Scheduling problems are difficult to resolve in ways that are both practical and satisfactory. One possibility is to repeat some programs at relatively closely spaced intervals if warranted by sufficient interest.

Some staff members, at all levels, were reluctant to participate fully. Targeting programs to clericals was particularly difficult. Although clericals did participate in the in-office programs, they were also encouraged to take advantage of the many external programs which are geared more towards their special needs.

For many reasons, it was easier to focus on the technical needs than on the theoretical and conceptual needs. It was easier for the staff to identify and assign a priority to technical needs. Technical areas lent themselves more readily to one-time sessions. Theoretical areas, to be covered in a meaningful way, usually would require a series of sessions, more preparation time, and the like. Only areas which could be covered effectively in a shorter timeframe were considered in order to avoid overlap with existing degree program offerings that have more to offer in terms of quality and content.

Costs and Benefits

There were costs attached to the program, although they were mainly indirect rather than direct. The largest component of the indirect cost was staff time, spent both in preparing and giving presentations and in administering and coordinating the program. Participation in programs was, to some extent, at the expense of other work related activities, although sometimes

the two were one and the same. Direct costs such as fee reimbursement for external programs, purchase of instructional aids, and subscriptions to periodicals, although worth noting, have not been substantial. Finally, a potential but unknown cost is whether the program will encourage higher rates of turnover among permanent staff by increasing their career marketability.

The program has benefited both the office and individuals in a number of ways. The most obvious collective benefit is that the office now has a more knowledgeable and productive staff that is able to make effective use of the tools available. Many staff members worked more hours than usual at no added cost to the University. This work was facilitated, in part, by the availability of the portable microcomputers for use at home.

The program contributed to office morale by fostering a more creative and intellectually stimulating atmosphere. The result was that staff members had more enthusiasm for their respective jobs. This was especially important for the longer term employees who, unlike the graduate students, have fewer opportunities to receive this kind of stimulation in other forums. The program has specifically encouraged the following:

1. a greater feeling of teamwork and a greater appreciation for the skills and knowledge that other staff members hold.
2. a willingness to approach office assignments--both routine and nonroutine--from a new perspective. Staff began to question the traditional ways of carrying out assignments and to ask how these tools might be used to do them differently or more effectively. The vast potential of the new technology has just begun to be realized. Actual changes in modes of operation will be a constantly evolving process.

The reputations of the office and its staff members have been enhanced among staff in closely associated offices through the presentations, and

through the announcement of programs which helped to create an awareness of staff expertise.

The most obvious individual benefit was that everyone learned a considerable amount in a rather short period of time, and that, for the most part, this added knowledge was viewed as useful. There was also a great deal of personal satisfaction gained from achieving an enhanced level of expertise and having others profit from it.

Costs are visible and immediate. Benefits, on the other hand, are somewhat intangible and tend to accrue over time. Therefore, precise analysis is difficult, but the benefits clearly seem to outweigh the costs.

Future of the Program

The success of the program, along with the recognition of everchanging needs, has led to a strong commitment to its continuation. The basic format of the program is unlikely to change, with the in-office portions continuing as the significant aspect.

Planned programs and suggested topics for the next few months include: an overview of research design and methodology including statistical techniques and software; demonstrations of micro software such as dBaseII and FYI; advanced uses, including interfacing of micro software; and expanded use of electronic networking capabilities at campus and cross-institutional levels. This list of programs and ideas is not inclusive and will expand as new areas of interest emerge.

Conclusions

This paper began with the premise that the professional development needs of the staff in institutional research offices should be addressed through intentional, systematic, and continuing efforts. The objective of the program described here was to broaden and develop the knowledge base and technical skills of the office as a whole, as well as to benefit individuals. A

multipronged approach that relied on a variety of educational resources and methods was the basis for the program. A program paradigm suggested six stages of activity: (1) assessing needs; (2) assessing opportunities and constraints; (3) matching the needs with existing programs; (4) developing an in-office program to fill the gap of unmet needs; (5) implementing the program; and (6) evaluating the program. Although these six stages were described here as successive and distinct, in reality they represented overlapping and continuous activities.

This program paradigm can be applied to institutional research offices in other settings. The size and composition of a particular office's staff will be important determinants of the structure of a program. A relatively small staff, for instance, would constrain the development of an extensive in-office program. In that case, cooperative efforts with other offices should be considered. Obviously, any program will need to be based on the unique set of needs, constraints, resources, and opportunities affecting that office. What is suggested here is a process for developing a program rather than a prescription for its structure and content.

Factors which contribute, then, to a successful program include the following:

1. First and foremost, the office must have an atmosphere supportive of professional development. A key figure in establishing and maintaining that atmosphere is the office director, who must take a proactive rather than just a reactive stance on the issue of professional development for his or her staff.
2. The director and the staff must share the understanding that professional development activities are an appropriate part of the work day.

3. Although all staff members have a personal responsibility for their professional development, at least one individual should be responsible for coordinating and facilitating group efforts. That coordinator should involve all staff members in needs assessment and evaluation efforts and should inform them regularly of plans and schedules.
4. Staff members need to share information on their respective work activities on a regular basis. This creates an awareness of knowledge and/or expertise in certain areas and facilitates the informal exchange of ideas. It also fosters program leadership.
5. All staff members should have a responsive attitude so that each is open and willing to be approached for help and suggestions by any other staff member.
6. The program planning process needs to be flexible so that changes can be made in response to changing circumstances.
7. Expectations regarding the intent and scope of the program and the performance of individuals need to be realistic. The program will not meet all the needs of the staff nor will all staff members choose to participate fully. Furthermore, because program leadership will be provided by professionals of institutional research, not human resource development, the emphasis of activities and presentations should be on content rather than on style of delivery.

A professional development program is essential for adapting and responding to the changing environment and the changing roles of institutional researchers. Such a program can be beneficial without being costly. The basic components of a successful effort are extensive knowledge of the needs and expertise of staff members and a creative approach to the use of any and all resources.

References

Chase, J. S. Time present and time past. In R. G. Cope (Ed.), New directions for institutional research: professional development for institutional research, no. 23. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1979, pp. 15-22.

Chase, J. S. and Tetlow, W. L. Experience is the child of thought. In R. G. Cope (Ed.), New directions for institutional research: professional development for institutional research, no. 23. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1979, pp. 23-31.

Cummings, L. L. and Schwab, D. P. Performance in organizations: determinants & appraisal. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1973.

Cyert, R. M. The management of nonprofit organizations. Lexington, MA: C. Heath and Company, 1975.

Dressel, P. L. Institutional researchers: created or educated? In R. G. Cope (Ed.), New directions for institutional research: professional development for institutional research, no. 23. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1979, pp. 43-48.

Emmett, A. Overcoming computer resistance. Personal Computing, 1983, 7, 80-93.

Fenstemacher, W. P. The institutional research director: professional development and career path. The AIR professional file, no. 13, Summer 1982.

Johnson, M. D. Career development in institutional research. The AIR professional file, no. 12, Spring 1982.

Mager, R. F. and Pipe, P. Analyzing performance problems or 'you really oughta wanna'. Belmont, CA: Fearon Publishers, 1970.

Spencer, R. L. Planning and the future of institutional research. In R. G. Cope (Ed.), New directions for institutional research: professional development for institutional research, no. 23. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1979, pp. 69-72.

Tetlow, W. L. From history observed one may prophesy. In R. G. Cope (Ed.), New directions for institutional research: professional development for institutional research, no. 23. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1979, pp. 1-3.